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FM AMEMBASSY YEREVAN
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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0029
RUEHSL/AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA 0010
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0050
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0007
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0005
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0344
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0024
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 0038
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0196
RHMFISS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEANFA/NRC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000693

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DEPT FOR EUR/CARC, EUR/PRA, ISN/RA, AND NEA/ARPI

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [RS](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: GOAM PAVES WAY FOR IRAN TO JOIN NUCLEAR REACTOR
FORUM

REF: A) YEREVAN 366 B) YEREVAN 353 C) YEREVAN 295 D)
YEREVAN 213 E) STATE 31059

Classified By: Amb. John M. Evans for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Despite high-level assurances to the contrary (ref A), Armenian organizers of the 12th Annual Forum of State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating VVER-type Reactors have acknowledged that they will not withdraw from hosting the nuclear reactor conference (ref B). The GOAM's decision to move ahead with the conference sets the stage for Iranian participation despite our demarches (refs D and E). Earlier, Armenian officials had told us Russia would substitute as host for the conference (ref C), and would likely oppose Iranian participation. Trying to appease both U.S. and Iranian interests by telling us one thing but doing another, it appears the GOAM has now squandered this option (its best for avoiding confrontation), and has provided Iran the window it needs to attend the VVER forum. While we hold out little hope that we will be able to turn this back around at this point, the Ambassador will raise this issue directly with President Kocharian at an upcoming meeting. End Summary.

VVER CONFERENCE: ARMENIA BACKING OUT OF BACKING OUT

¶2. (C) MFA Arms Control and International Security Advisor Vartuhi Asaturian told us May 19 that Armenia planned to host the 12th Annual Forum of State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating VVER-type Reactors. Officials at the Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (ANRA) confirmed that the conference will now take place in Yerevan June 27-29. Asaturian did not offer an explanation for the GOAM's decision to host the conference, despite previous assurances that President Robert Kocharian had ordered conference organizers to back out (ref A).

WILL IRAN PARTICIPATE IN THE YEREVAN CONFERENCE?

13. (C) Asaturian claimed that while "some delegations" had already confirmed attendance, she had "no information" about Iranian intentions to participate, though Iran had received an invitation in January. Attempting to deflect Armenia's responsibility as conference organizers, she repeated past excuses, noting that the "Finnish Regulatory Authority" had sent the invitations (ref A) and that the decision to invite Iran "was made" at the previous Helsinki gathering. She said she was unsure whether Armenia had supported inviting Iran to the next conference.

COMMENT: FROM BAD TO WORSE

14. (C) Faced with a difficult situation but a plausible opportunity to avoid confrontation with both the United States and Iran, the GOAM's decision to move ahead with the VVER conference is disappointing. We have repeatedly registered with our GOAM interlocutors the importance of delivering a strong, unified message against proliferation in Iran. If, as Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian told the Ambassador, President Kocharian had ordered organizers to pass responsibility off to Russia -- the next chair of the forum -- Kocharian likely played a part in the reversal of the decision as well. Nevertheless, the Ambassador plans to raise this issue directly with the president at an upcoming meeting.
EVANS